



ROMAN CITY OF COMPLUTUM

The Casa de Hippolytus



RED DE PATRIMONIO HISTÓRICO DE ALCALÁ

ALCALÁ DE HENARES
AYUNTAMIENTO



Casa de Hippolytus 3D hypothesis

Located on the old Roman town of Complutum outskirts, the Casa de Hippolytus stands as one of the very few examples in the Roman Empire of what is called *collegium iuvenum*, a kind of college where wealthy youngmen were granted, in a leisure and religious atmosphere, with the education needed in their future life as magistrates of the town. Remains date from two different periods: a first structure with just a few remaining walls dating 1st century A.D., and a second one, the most important, with the remains of the *collegium* dating the end of IIIrd century A.D.

THE ROOMS

Daily life at the *collegium* used to take place in several different rooms. They were recreational spaces with baths, religious and meeting places, and a large garden.

1. THE VAULTED ROOM

This room, whose purpose is still unknown, was built with a special system: the inner vault is covered by a kind of hollow pottery bottles, called *tubuli fictile*, assembled in a way to make a lighter and isolating vault. This feature leads to think that the room was probably used as changing room or *apodyterium*, reading room, library or for religious purposes.

2. THE CENTRAL COURT

The Casa hosts a large bath complex with its *caldarium* (hot area), *tepidarium* (warm area) and *frigidarium* (cool area). This central space with access to all rooms stands as *frigidarium*. Two different kind of mosaics mark the two spaces in which the court is divided. The eastern, with the fishing scene signed by the artist Hippolytus (who gives the name to the *collegium* itself), is the most remarkable. This main scene should have been placed in the centre but it was moved to the south-eastern corner in order to create a scenografic link between two aquatic atmospheres: the square mosaic decorated pool to the east and the clover shape pond to the west. The western area, isolated from the eastern by a portico, is paved



with a mosaic floor with geometrical and floral motives giving access to a clover shaped pond originally covered by a mosaic vault.

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3. THE HIPPOCAUST

This area, whose only remains left are the brick pillars, was the *caldarium* and the *tepidarium*, the bath's hot and warm atmospheres. These pillars or *pilae* used to support the original mosaic floor disappeared nowadays. The whole made a hollow underground area filled by hot air coming from two ovens, the *praeefurnia*, endowed by bellows which used to blow and distribute hot air in.

4. THE MINERALISED WATER WHEEL.

The existence of this wheel could have influenced the building of the collegium on this site.

5. THE LATRINE

Rectangular mosaic paved room with a perimeter canal to evacuate rubbish.

6. THE GARDEN

The garden, one of the most important parts of the complex, is organised through eight semicircles, one in front of the other, used to sit on for meals, speeches, lessons, etc. The garden offers a variety of vegetal species (palm trees, smooth leaved elms, lime trees, cedars, jasmines, etc.), some of them oriental, some of them medicinal. This fact, together with the remains of pelicans bones found in excavations, leads to think of the recreation of an oriental style garden which is rather exceptional in western roman world.

7. THE DIANA'S WORSHIP ROOM

This trapezium shaped room was devoted to Diana, goddess associated to hunting and nature, and to Hercules, protector of youth. Hunt and youth are remarkable collegium features, and since a goddess piece of sculpture was found during excavations as well as parts of a column which supported it, this theory seems rather plausible. Religion is also present near the Casa: the family who sponsored the *collegium*, the Annios, built their mausoleum just opposite the Casa de Hippolytus so that the collegiates could have in view the mausoleum and bear in mind their benefactors.



The Casa de Hippolytus is part of the **Roman Town of Complutum Archaeological Route** within the Alcalá's Historical Heritage Framework and the CAM Open Sites Framework.



ADRESS

Avenida de Madrid s/n (close to El Juncal Sports Centre). Alcalá de Henares.
Local buses: number 1 ●
Coming from Madrid:
Suburban Train: C2 and C7 lines, La Garena Station ●
Coach lines: 223 (Madrid: Avda de América, Alcalá de Henares: former National Road II-Liade) ●

FEE 1€

Free entrance for all visitors under 10 and over 65.
Reduced fee of 2€ when visiting three sites: Casa de Hippolytus, the Forum monumental complex, Centro de Interpretación del Burgo de Santiuste and Santa María tower.

Specific contents for children.

ACCESSIBILITY

More information on www.turismoalcala.com and www.ayto-alcaladehenares.es.

TIMETABLE

- Summer (May to September):
Tuesday-Friday: from 10'00 a.m to 14'00 p.m.,
Saturday and Sunday: from 10'00 a.m. to 14'00 p.m. and from 17'00 p.m. to 20'00 p.m.
- Winter (October to April):
Tuesday-Friday: from 10'00 a.m to 14'00 p.m.,
Saturday, Sunday and holidays: from 10'00 a.m. to 14'00 p.m. and from 16'00 p.m. to 19'00 p.m.

MORE ROMAN PLACES TO VISIT

The Forum Monumental Complex. Roman town of Complutum.